

# What Happened to Billy Dansey?

By Ishbel M. Ross

This is the mystery of Bill Dansey, as it stood late last week, when it seemed that there was no prospect of solving it.

ONCE in a while, before it is old enough to help itself, somebody's child vanishes mysteriously. This is tragedy of the direst kind. It is more exciting to a countryside than a murder, a robbery or a divorce. Every one helps in the hunt, because every one knows how a mother feels about the loss of her baby—particularly if he is the only one.

But not in years has a lost baby caused more excitement than three-year-old Billy Dansey, of Hammon, N. J., who vanished as completely on the morning of October 8 as if the earth had opened and swallowed him. No single clue of any importance has come to light. Detectives who have worked night and day on the job confess themselves baffled. The theory that the child was kidnapped seems to be generally accepted, but the possibility of his being dead in the swampy regions or deerfields not far from his home is also mooted.

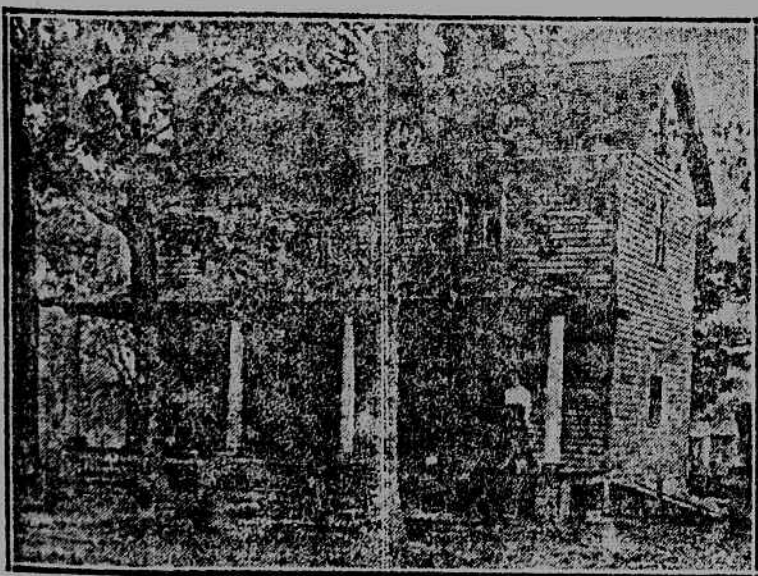
## The Scene

Hammon is a sleepy country town lying half way between Philadelphia and Atlantic City. It does not get up until 9 o'clock in the morning and it goes to bed about 10 o'clock ordinarily, but the last two weeks it has been more or less awake all the time. The disappearance of Billy Dansey has been a nine-days' wonder and the search goes on with unabated vigor. Not a child is at large in the place. Mothers afraid that their youngsters may share the fate of Billy are keeping the little ones inside or watching them unceasingly when they play in the yard.

The Dansey house lies about three-quarters of a mile from the town. It is a plain wooden, two-story building close to the roadside, with nothing very remarkable about it save its proximity to the marvelous fields of dahlias owned by Charles White, a near neighbor. It was among the dahlias that Billy's bobbing head was last seen. They rival the autumn woods in their blaze of color. Deep crimson, russet and yellow, they grow in splendid rows that stretch far back into the bush. They are cultivated by the Whites for marketing purposes.

## Strangers

The Danseys moved to Hammon from Pittsburgh about five



The Dansey Home. On the porch are Hercules Dansey, sr., Billy's grandfather, and Mrs. Estelle Dansey, the baby's mother.

weeks ago, so that they are absolute strangers in the neighborhood. They now speak of leaving because of the unwelcome notoriety that has come to them. The father is a small, thin man who suffers from asthma and took over the farm in Hammon, hoping that his health would improve with the outdoor life. He was formerly employed by one of the Western railroads as a traffic manager in its Pittsburgh office. He has been prostrate much of the time since the child disappeared. The mother, Stella Dansey, is an enigma to all who have come in contact with her. Small, slight, fair and pale, she has gone about her household duties with unruffled composure, has not broken down at all, believes firmly her child will be returned to her, and shuns the barrage of publicity and curiosity which has been turned upon her. She walks around with

around in the cold, wet swamp until I became convinced that he was kidnapped, and that he was alive and well. I am so sure he is not dead."

## Religious

Mrs. Dansey appears to be of a religious turn of mind. She prays for Billy's return and reads her Bible frequently through the day. She works to keep her mind occupied and goes out for an occasional run in their car. Every day she follows Billy's trail back into the woods, not that she expects anything to happen, but because it gives her some comfort.

The little house seems very empty and forlorn. There are all the signs of a child about it, without the actual presence of the little one. Empty shoes that make no pattering noise running up and down stairs. Toys heaped untidily, just

the air of an automaton, almost as if her arteries were frozen. She has exquisite composure, but talks as if she were a fatalist; that it was foreordained Billy would disappear; that he is bound to turn up again; and that no mad rushing around or keen searching will avail to bring him back. She is silent and inscrutable as the Sphinx and no marks of the intense suffering she must be undergoing are visible outwardly. The detectives say she baffles them. Apparently she is of the proud, reserved type that represents the searching scrutiny of the law, the press and the public.

"Why should my life be meticulously examined like this?" she asks in her level, passionless tones. "What has all this to do with Billy? The notoriety is intensely unwelcome to me. It is unnecessary. The child has disappeared. I have no enemies. Someone has picked him up by mistake. He will be returned to me in God's good time. Whoever took him would not dare to come back with him now. But I have absolute faith. I lie and think about him at night, but I know he is not dead. He will be given back to me. No one could be so cruel as to keep him."

## Couldn't Walk Far

"He was such a dear little chap, very chatty and fond of hanging around me as I worked. He was very keen about being in the country and liked playing with 'Tarley,' the little white boy next door. I don't believe for a moment that he was lost. He was heavy on his feet and could never walk far, so it is ridiculous to suppose that he wandered away and got lost in the swamp."

"I'm sure this was meant to happen. Perhaps because we were too fond of the boy. It may be vengeance that we cared for him so much. If only he'd be returned to us safe, we are perfectly willing to ask any questions. At first I couldn't bear to think of him wandering



Billy Dansey, Who Disappeared From Hammon, N. J., and His Mother

as he left them. His mother will not touch Billy's toys, for she wants him to find them just the same when he comes back. There is his great, big drum that does not give out a squeak, his Teddy Bear, whose beady eyes look sadly out for the master that does not come; his old tin soldier that waits patiently for the return of its "Little Boy Blue," and the pretty Kewpie who, though Billy's best beloved, laughs with all the joy she had when he blew her a kiss as he wandered out before 9 o'clock on the morning of his disappearance.

But aside from his parents, Billy missed most of all by Jack, the faithful terrier who first gave the warning that he was gone, and "Tarley" White, his playmate, who vows that Billy was "lost in the woods and eaten by the bears." Charlie does not believe he will ever see Billy again and he is very sad about it. The two boys look somewhat alike and one of the theories is that Billy was kidnapped in mistake for Charlie by an enemy of the latter's grandfather, Edward H. White. The fact that Billy Dansey was on the White property at the time of his disappearance has given some color to this supposition, further strengthened by a letter received by the Danseys saying that Billy was well and that he had been taken in mistake for Charlie, as the writer wanted to get even with the grandfather. Little credence is now placed in this theory.

## To Play With "Tarley"

Billy would have been three years old in December—a stocky little chap, with fair "bobbed" hair, light blue eyes, slightly crossed, and "rather heavy on his legs." When he announced that he was going over to play with Charlie on the morning of the 8th, his mother dressed him warmly, for it was an extremely cold day. He had on faded blue rompers, a little brown sweater, black shoes and a peaked baseball cap. He left his mother busy at her household tasks and wandered over to "Tarley's." Mr. and Mrs. Charles White were gathering dahlias. They greeted Billy

and he called to them. Then they saw the baseball cap bobbing up and down among the dahlias and that was the last time he was seen by any one in the neighborhood. The alarm was not given for fully fifteen minutes. Jack, who had started off with Billy, ran home alone wagging his tail. This made Mrs. Dansey wonder, for the dog never came home without the boy. She ran out and called to the Whites, who said they had seen Billy disappear through the dahlias in the direction of the peach orchard lying behind. The mother and Mrs. White set off in pursuit, calling all the time. But they got no response and then they realized that something was the matter. The father, Hercules Van Morder



Charles White, jr., the boy the kidnappers may really have been after.

Dansey, was summoned from town. The villagers came to help. By night time every one within a radius of miles knew that a child had mysteriously disappeared and scores of volunteer searchers were scouring the surrounding territory. It was several days before organized parties set out to search the woods and

deerfields. The school children volunteered of their own accord to do what they could and every day bands of them went roving around with all the eagerness of youth.

Services were held in the First Presbyterian Church and prayers were offered for Billy's return. The Town Council voted a \$1,000 reward for the return of the boy alive.

The theories advanced about the disappearance of the boy are as follows:

1. That Billy got lost in the woods or swamps.
2. That he was kidnapped in mistake for Charlie White.
3. That he was picked up and borne away or else killed and buried by the kidnappers.
4. That he was run over by a car and that his body was disposed of in some way.

Clues are now limited to the following: Tiny imprints on the sandy soil leading as far back as an old irrigation ditch; the finding of a wilted crimson dahlia lying near the ditch; the letter saying that Billy was taken in mistake for Charlie, and breathing a spirit of revenge toward Mr. White; the story of a local woman that she had seen two rough-looking men leading along a little boy. Bloodhounds were used and they trailed Billy's scent as far as the irrigation ditch.

## Lay of the Land

The surrounding country is thickly wooded and has soft, marshy spots here and there. The land is essentially sandy in nature, with a yielding surface. Immediately back of the dahlia fields is a dense wood where the leaves are falling every day and piling themselves up in heaps high enough to conceal the bodies of many babies. They are settling in the hollows and swirling into the rooks and crannies which abound in this bushy belt. There is an unhealthy fungus growth in the marshy spots, where toadstools flourish and briars interlace. It is a wood in which it would be easy to lose one's way. The deerfields lie beyond. They have shallow bogs and a marshy surface. It would take a long time and many men to scour them completely. The search is going on every day in this area. As much of the water as possible is being dragged. An aeroplane, flying low, was used to take a bird's-eye view of the region. Buzzards have been seen on two occasions hovering over the marsh. The night of the 8th was extremely cold and the sunrise is that if the child was actually lost it would have died of exhaustion and exposure within twenty-four hours.

The possibility of the child's being held for ransom is remote, as the Danseys are in quite moderate circumstances. Little is known of their past and pliancy has been added to the case by the fact that they are utter strangers in the neighborhood. The parents are emphatic on the point that they had no enemies in Pittsburgh and that there could be no motive in taking the boy from them.

## A Curious Letter

The letter, which brought the White family into the mystery, and caused a great stir in the neighborhood, runs as follows:

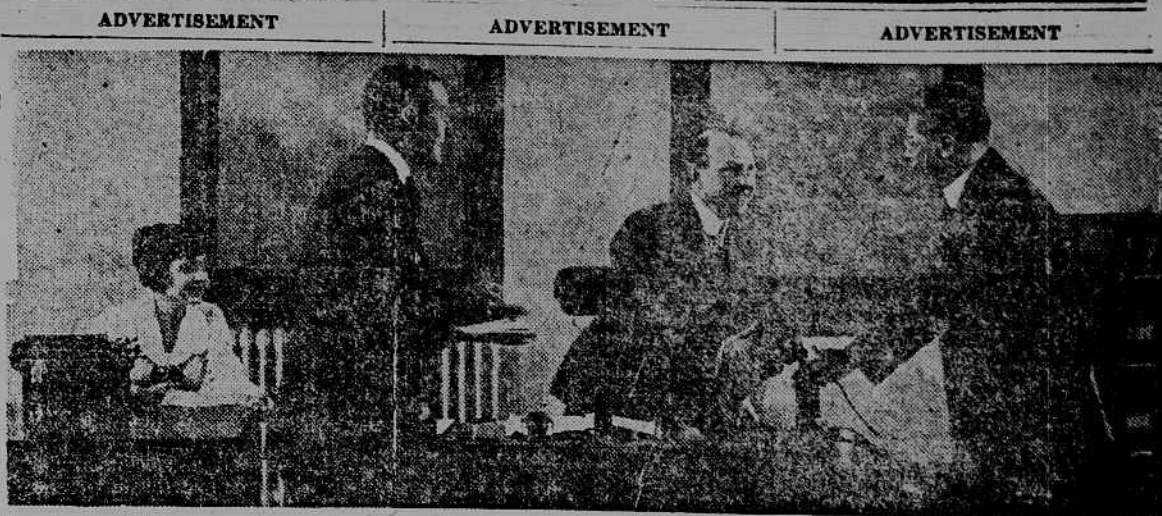
"Mrs. Dansey: I made a mistake in getting the wrong kid, but as I never can get an opportunity of getting the White boy, why, I'm going to hold on to this boy. He looks good to me."

"I am going to raise him on a farm until he is the age of going to school and then I am going to educate him. Now, don't worry about the boy, as I will have him west of the Rockies in five days. He is a wonderful little chap and I already love him."

"Now the combined private detective agencies will not apprehend me as I have his hair dyed and am all ready to be on my way. When you receive this I'll be on or close to the Mississippi River. I can give him a better home and a more brilliant future than you. So rest easy and let destiny have its way. I am, sincerely, one that will be a real father to the boy. J. P."

P. S.—"He is mine by mistake." Chief County Detective Wilson and his assistant, Benjamin Nussbaum, attach little importance to this letter. They say it is written in a woman's hand disguised as a man's. Scores of letters have reached Mrs. Dansey from seers, spiritualists and people who think they have seen the boy. The detectives have run most of these to earth and found their theories and ideas to be equally futile. The mother herself prefers not to open any of the letters. She does not believe that when word of the return of her boy comes, if it ever does, it will come by mail.

She has issued a statement that is being distributed broadcast, appealing to the mother instinct and asking for the return of her only child. Billy's photograph goes along with it.



"I was astounded at my new power over men and women. People actually went out of their way to do things for me—they seemed EAGER TO PLEASE ME"

## The Secret of Making People Like You

"Getting people to like you is the quick road to success—it's more important than ability," says the man. It surely did wonders for him. How he does it—a simple method which anyone can use instantly.

ALL the office was talking about it and we were wondering which one of us would be the lucky man.

There was an important job to be filled—as Assistant-to-the-President. According to the general run of salaries in the office, this one would easily pay from \$7,000 to \$10,000 a year.

The main requisite, as we understood it, was striking personality and the ability to meet even the biggest men in their offices, their clubs and their homes on a basis of absolute equality. This the firm considered of even more importance than knowledge of the business.

YOU know just what happens when news of this sort gets around the office. The boys got to picking the man among themselves. They had the choice all narrowed down to two men—Harrison and myself. That was the way I felt about it, too. Harrison was big enough for the job, and could undoubtedly make a success of it. But, personally, I felt that I had the edge on him in lots of ways. And I was sure that the firm knew it too.

Never shall I forget my thrill of pleasure when the president's secretary came into my office with a cheery smile, looked at me meaningly, handed me a bulletin, and said, "Mr. Frazer, here is the news about the new Assistant-to-the-President."

There seemed to be a new note of added respect in her attitude toward me. I smiled my appreciation as she left my desk.

At last I had come into my own! Never did the sun shine so brightly as on that morning, and never did it seem so good to be alive! These were my thoughts as I gazed out of the window, seeing not the hurrying throngs, but vivid pictures of my new position flashing before me. And then for a further joyous thrill I read the bulletin. It said, "Effective January 1, Mr. Henry J. Peters, of our Cleveland office, will assume the duties of Assistant-to-the-President at the home office."

PETERS! Peters!—surely it could not be Peters! Why, this fellow Peters was only a branch-office salesman. . . . Personality! Why, he was only five feet four inches high, and had no more personality than a mouse. Stack him up against a big man and he would look and act like an office boy. I knew Peters well and there was nothing to him, nothing at all. January the first came and Peters assumed his new duties. All the boys were openly hostile to him. Naturally, I felt very keenly about it, and did not exactly go out of my way to make things pleasant for him—not exactly!

But our own opposition did not seem to bother Peters. He went right on with his work and began to make good. Soon I noticed that, despite my feeling against him, I was secretly beginning to admire him. He was winning over the other boys, too. It wasn't long before we all buried our little hatchets and palled up with Peters.

The funny thing about it was the big hit he made with the people we did business with. I never saw anything like it. They would come in and write in and telephone in to the firm and praise Peters to the skies. They insisted on doing business with him, and gave him orders of a size that made us dizzy to look at. And offers of positions!—why, Peters had almost as many fancy-figure positions offered to him as a dictionary has words.

WHAT I could not get into my mind was how a little, unassuming, ordinary-to-look-at chap like Peters would make such an impression with everyone—especially with influential men. He seemed to have an uncanny influence over people. The masterly Peters of today was an altogether different man from the commonplace Peters I had first met years ago. I could not figure it out, nor could the other boys.

One day at luncheon I came right out and asked Peters how he did it. I half expected him to evade. But he didn't. He let me in on the secret. He said he was not afraid to do it because there was always plenty of room at the top.

What Peters told me acted on my mind in exactly the same way as when you stand on a hill and look through binocular glasses at objects in the far distance. Many things I could not see before suddenly leaped into my mind with startling clearness. A new sense of power

surged through me. And I felt the urge to put it into action.

Within a month I was getting remarkable results. I had suddenly become popular. Business men of importance who had formerly given me only a passing nod of acquaintance suddenly showed a desire for my friendship. I was invited into the most select social circles. People—even strangers—actually went out of their way to do things for me. At first I was astounded at my new power over men and women. Not only could I get them to do what I wanted them to do, but they actually anticipated my wishes and seemed eager to please me.

One of our biggest customers had a grievance against the firm. He held off payment of a big bill and switched to one of our competitors. I was sent to see him. He met me like a cornered tiger. A few words and I calmed him. Inside of fifteen minutes he was showering me with apologies. He gave me a check in full payment, another big order, and promised to continue giving us all his business.

I could tell you dozens of similar instances, but they all tell the same story—the ability to make people like you, believe what you want them to believe, and to do what you want them to do. I take no personal credit for what I have done. All the credit I give to the method Peters told me about. We have both told it to lots of our friends, and it has enabled them to do just as remarkable things as Peters and I have done.

BUT you want to know what method I used to do all these remarkable things. It is this: You know that everyone does not think alike. What one likes another dislikes. What pleases one offends another, and what offends one pleases another. Well, there is your cue. You can make an instant hit with anyone if you say the things they want you to say, and act the way they want you to act. Do this and they will surely like you, and believe in you, and will go miles out of their way to PLEASE YOU.

You can do this easily by knowing certain simple signs. Written on every man, woman and child are signs, as clearly and as distinctly as though they were in letters a foot high, which show you from one quick glance exactly what to say and to do to please them—to get them to believe what you want them to believe—to think as you think—to do exactly what you want them to do.

Knowing these simple signs is the whole secret of getting what you want out of life—of making friends, of business and social advancement. Every great leader uses this method. That is why he is a leader. Use it yourself and you will quickly become a leader—nothing can stop you. And you will want to use it for no other reason than to protect yourself against others.

WHAT Peters told me at luncheon that day was this: Get Dr. Blackford's "Reading Character at Sight." I did so. This is how I learned to do all the remarkable things I have told you about.

You have heard of Dr. Blackford, the Master Character Analyst. Many concerns will not employ a man without first getting Dr. Blackford to pass on him. Concerns such as Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company, Baker Vawter Company, Scott Paper Company and many others pay Dr. Blackford large annual fees for advice on dealing with human nature. So great was the demand for the services that Dr. Blackford could not even begin to fill all her engagements. So Dr. Blackford has explained the method in a simple seven-lesson course entitled "Reading Character at Sight." Even a half-hour's reading of this remarkable course will give you an insight into human nature and a power over people which will surprise you.

Such confidence have the publishers in Dr. Blackford's Course, "Reading Character at Sight," that they will gladly send it to you on approval. Send no money. Merely fill in and mail the coupon. The complete course will go to you instantly, on approval, all charges prepaid. Look it over thoroughly. See if it lives up to the claims made for it. If you do not want to keep it, then return it, and the transaction is closed. And if you decide to keep it—as you surely will—then merely remit Five Dollars in full payment.

Remember, you take no risk, you assume no obligation. The entire course goes to you on approval. You've everything to gain—nothing to lose. So mail the coupon NOW, while this remarkable offer remains open.



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